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# The Politics of Parenting in Nancy Huston's *Fault Lines*

## Transgenerational Trauma Revisited

Susan Bainbrigge

Writing in the *Financial Times* about French author Alexandre Jardin's book *Des gens très bien*,<sup>1</sup> a controversial revisiting of his wartime family history and grandfather's collaborationist past, journalist Simon Kuper concluded his review with the statement: "One day the war might cease to be a family trauma, but that is still decades away."<sup>2</sup> Henry Rousso's 1987 study of the "syndrome de Vichy" underlines this view: the traumatic legacy of the Occupation in France, ever-present in the French psyche as "un passé qui ne passe pas."<sup>3</sup> The legacies of World War II continue to inform writings by contemporary authors and to be of interest to readers and critics, as evidenced by the many literary prizes and high volume sales of such publications.<sup>4</sup>

Nancy Huston is no exception: writing in her native English and adoptive French, she has drawn on her own experiences of displacement and loss to revisit the legacies of war and familial trauma in novels such as *The Mark of the Angel* (*L'Empreinte de l'ange*, 1998) and the focus here, *Fault Lines*.<sup>5</sup> First published in French as *Lignes de faille* in 2006 (winner of the Prix Femina), and shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction, the novel portrays the lives of four generations of one family, via four first-person child narrators, in a story told from present to past. The novel opens with great-grandson Sol's story, in 2004, followed by "Randall, 1982," mother "Sadie, 1962," and ending with "Kristina, 1944–45." Legacies of transgenerational transmission of trauma haunt the subsequent generations in a multitude of ways, beginning with

the recent past in the United States and stretching back via parents, grandparents, and a great-grandparent to wartime Europe.

Randall, Sadie, and Kristina are presented in their roles as parents, grandparents, and a great-grandparent. The origins of the family trauma are traced backward through accounts of multiple traumatic events as they affect various members of the family, in different historical, religious, and geographical contexts. These include the United States and Canada, Israel, and Germany, encompassing Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, and Protestantism, from World War II through McCarthyism, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the World Trade Center towers terrorist attack, and torture committed by soldiers in Abu Ghraib prison during the Iraq war that began in March 2003. The retrospective and multifocal style of narration supports a reading in which the idea of originating trauma is rendered complex and nuanced.<sup>6</sup> Huston examines the complex dynamics of parent-child relationships (especially the maternal role) in the light of trauma. Her novel offers alongside this family narrative a broader critique of various parenting “ideologies” including portraits of multiple transmissions of trauma. There is a reflection on ways in which Holocaust legacies are explored; the novel presents a complex portrayal of a family whose transnational history intersects with Holocaust testimony. That testimony is presented via the different viewpoints of the characters and depictions of the societies in which they live; it thus contains a dynamic quality and resonates with studies by the likes of Dominick LaCapra. He emphasizes the need to attend to the particular perspectives and potential transferential dynamics of the witness or, in his words, the particularities of the “remembering self.”<sup>7</sup> In her study of Huston’s novel, Lepage identifies the impact of trauma on the four narrators in her analysis of history, memory, and forgetting (identifying a flight of “errance” for Kristina, a thirst for knowledge in Sadie, an awareness of conflict for Randall, and

an obsession with security in Sol).<sup>8</sup> My analysis seeks to extend specifically the analysis of trauma in the text, notably, transgenerational trauma, informed by Marianne Hirsch's work in this field.<sup>9</sup> The transgenerational dynamics resonate in Huston's portraits where the six-year-olds of Kristina, Sadie, Randall, and Sol recount their experiences from first-, second-, third-, and fourth-generation perspectives.<sup>10</sup>

The ethical imperative to understand the past in order to identify and deal with unresolved processes that risk repeating themselves is also a psychoanalytically inspired idea that has been explored in many literary analyses relating to the Holocaust. Stephen Frosh, in his study *Hauntings: Psychoanalysis and Ghostly Transmissions*, writes explicitly about the political and ethical engagement inherent in such an enterprise, which requires us to look both forward and back, not as lone voices, but collectively:

Our steps are dogged by both past and future; we are never left alone. This is one of the major effects of reading the uncanny with Freud: that we become aware of how much our sense of being haunted by the past is actually a shivering realisation of what is to come. . . . It is a *reminder* as much as it is a *remainder*; what is left over and uncared for insists on justice and reparation. . . .

Psychoanalytically, something that keeps stirring us up has to be acknowledged and worked with, however drastic the changes this demands in our ongoing lives. Haunting is therefore the space not only of the meeting of personal and social, but of past and future. It is a message from the past of what the future will become if we do nothing about it; indeed, of what we each will become if we do not reflect and change.<sup>11</sup>

This "call to action" via literature has been taken up by many second- and third-generation writers who explore the subject of World War II, with an increasing awareness of the blurred boundaries between testimony and fiction, as terms such as "autobiographical novel," "autofiction," "faction," or the "counterfactual narrative" suggest.<sup>12</sup> I will explore this "call to action" in more detail, specifically in terms of the depiction of family dynamics and trauma in Huston's novel.

As a survivor Kristina has a fraught relationship with her daughter Sadie, who likewise

struggles to connect with son Randall, who in turn despairs of his son Sol. Sol's and Sadie's thirst to "know" is counterbalanced by their respective parents' preference not to. Huston's text engages with the personal and political implications of "caring" and the consequences of "not caring." The return of "uncared for" aspects, the legacies of "what is left over," as articulated by Frosh, seem to me to be at the heart of Huston's transnational, relational project. Analysis of Frosh's "reminders" and "remainders" offers a springboard to open up the transgenerational and embodied dimensions of the story.

Portraits of parenting across the four narratives reveal manifestations of transgenerational trauma across a range of contexts, relationships, and settings, and within varied social and historical landscapes. Huston uses dreams, nightmares, transitional objects, bodily symbols, languages, and religions to explore the conscious and unconscious transmissions that influence the family dynamics, and that serve as a warning of what the future might hold should we fail to note their significance. In addition to the theories on transgenerational trauma and its specters, the analysis is informed by psychoanalytical theories on child development, identity formation, and object relations, as elaborated by Sigmund Freud, Donald Winnicott, Melanie Klein, Wilfred Bion, and André Green.

## Children and Caretaking

Who looks after whom, how, to what effect, and why? The four-part, first-person-narrator structure offers multifocal perspectives on the characters and their views of themselves, others, and experiences of trauma. One objection to this narrative style, commented on in some reviews of the English publication, relates to the presentation of relative maturity and apparent sophistication of the child narrators.<sup>13</sup> Their behaviors challenge our credulity: six-year-old Sol describes masturbating to online porn; the young Sadie is highly articulate about her inner

“Fiend”; Randall is adept at deciphering and describing the nuances of his parents’ relationship. Given these perspectives, expressed via fluent, expansive language, the reader is required to suspend a certain disbelief: Can these really be the voices of six-year-olds?

Yet, when the histories of the children are described, what is striking is that their traumatized upbringings have robbed them of a secure childhood in which they are allowed to be children; they are frequently presented as the caretakers of their parents. The phrase “No child can know the secrets of the past . . .” printed on the cover of the English language publication is radically questioned as we learn the uncomfortable truth that, often with tragic consequences, the child “knows” all too well such secrets. Huston’s response in an interview identifies her own starting point for the novel: the impact of changed, potentially traumatic circumstances on a child’s sense of self:

The reason this story [of the Lebensborn children] struck me so violently was not so much the proof that the Nazis were so bad—since there is probably not a subject under the sun on which the consensus is so universal . . . but the question of identity, and what happens to a child when suddenly it has to switch lanes, learn it’s a German child, learn the language, and how this would shape the child.<sup>14</sup>

Huston’s novel dramatizes the complex dynamics between four generations of one family in terms of the impact of traumatic “fault lines” on the individual, the family, and the wider community.<sup>15</sup> As will become evident, the *Lebensborn* program is not the only potentially provocative depiction of child care in the novel.<sup>16</sup>

## Extreme Parenting: The *Lebensborn* Program and Twenty-First Century California

The premise for the book begins with Himmler’s extreme parenting regime between 1940 and 1945: in the Nazi *Lebensborn* (“fountains of life”) program “over two hundred thousand children were stolen from the territories occupied by the Wehrmacht: Poland, the Ukraine, and the Baltic

countries” (author’s note, 305). Many were placed with German families as part of the ideological pursuit of Aryanization. In Huston’s novel, Kristina is one such baby, taken from her Ukrainian parents to be looked after by a German family in Munich. This initial rupture is followed by a further separation after the war: her passage to Canada to her new adoptive family facilitated by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA<sup>17</sup>). The various emotional and fraught reunions between Kristina and her (nonbiological) sister Greta, and fellow Lebensborn “brother” (and eventual lover) Johann (later known by his original birth name Janek), are presented as moments of traumatic return. Death and loss frame the encounters, old battles and longings refuse to die, and notions of reconciliation and closure are problematized. If this traumatic history is the catalyst for writing the book, the novel’s opening presents us with a different landscape: early twenty-first-century parenting mores in California, recounted via Kristina’s great-grandson Sol.

California, 2004. Narrator Sol’s story is set in a state governed by Republican bodybuilder, actor, and celebrity Arnold Schwarzenegger. Sol presents as an indulged, self-centered individual with grandiose fantasies of omnipotent control and success (3, 14, 40). However, beneath this precociously sexualized “sun king” (3) exterior emerges a vulnerable boy who struggles to reconcile reality, fantasy, and illusion, whose relationship to his own body and needs is highly problematical, and whose relationships with others are a source of considerable anxiety.<sup>18</sup>

The unsettling backdrop is the Iraq war and fears of terrorism. Father Randall’s anti-Arab tendencies are initially unexplained. Mother Tess, described as “My Miraculous Mother” (14), is extremely protective of her child, carefully monitoring his health, food intake, and toileting habits (59, 62). In Sol’s words, “Mom’s job is to keep *me* safe and I think we’ve probably got the

safest home on the planet. It's *childproofed*, which is a word Mom explained to me a couple of weeks ago" (15). In this culture, parenting courses cover safety issues, how to interact with one's children, and "classes in meditation and positive thinking and relaxation and self-esteem" (18). Sol has been taught to read by structured interventions (8). The prevailing belief is that positive self-esteem is enhanced by unstinting encouragement (14). Tess panders to his fads, cuts up his food, and fails to impose boundaries ("I'm actually never hungry and Mom is very understanding about this, she only gives me foods I like because they circulate with ease" (4)). Others, such as Randall and grandmother Sadie, see Tess spoiling him (4, 18, 36, 66, 71); likewise Sol's great-grandmother Erra (the formerly named Kristina) makes fun of these overprotective tendencies (34).

Sol's presentation of his parents' views on corporal punishment is a mocking of their nonviolent stance (19–21). Here, he appears detached from his childhood self, and this apparent estrangement is a recurring feature. He is dismissive of adults and their attempts to look after him, preferring to position himself as autonomous and self-sufficient (39). The text presents some of his thoughts in broken syntactical form, emphasizing a fantasy of omnipotence, an apparent detachment from reality, with the suggestion of the underlying internal disintegration:

In playschool{~?~COMP: Tab space}I have to hold back{~?~COMP: Tab space}so no one will guess the truth{~?~COMP: Tab space}about my super intelligence{~?~COMP: Tab space}my superplans{~?~COMP: Tab space}my superpowers (37).

Sol's role reversals with his main caregiver point to a relationship in which he assumes protective control: "She thinks I'm too young to know about death so I do my best to protect her" (13). Tess's inability to set realistic limits is highlighted by Sol's ability to access inappropriate imagery and film, a fact that makes her extreme censorship of television viewing all the more ineffectual (8).



Freud refers to the (healthy) narcissism of the early infant stage in which “His Majesty the baby” believes himself to be at the center of his own universe.<sup>19</sup> These early experiences are affected by incursions into reality through various developmental stages such as weaning, awareness of dependence, and the presence of others in a wider world, described by Freud as the movement from “pleasure principle” to “reality principle.” All these steps require the capacity to tolerate the psychic pain of loss and separation. Jean-Michel Quinodoz elaborates in his study, *Reading Freud*, that narcissism was understood in Freudian terms as stages in sexual development between auto-eroticism and object-love. In an early state of what he called “primary narcissism,” explains Quinodoz,

infants take themselves as their love-object and feel that the whole world revolves around them, before going on to choose some external object. The capacity to love other people for what they are, perceived as being separate and different from the self, is a progress in relationship terms.<sup>20</sup>

In the light of Freud, Donald Winnicott’s theories on “good enough” mothering are also pertinent for Sol’s story: overprotective parenting, he argued, could be as detrimental as neglectful parenting.<sup>21</sup> Tess is unable to see her son as he is: the portrait becomes an ironic satire of “helicopter” parenting, in which the child is spoiled by overindulgence and an absence of realistic boundary-setting, and at the same time, traumatically deprived of the freedom simply to “be” a child.<sup>22</sup>

These bookended portraits of the Lebensborn program and of twenty-first-century California can be considered as structuring features of the book. They present an implicit and comparative critique of “parenting” and trauma. Huston is reported as expressing a reluctance to agree that one era is used to mirror the other: the “fault lines” of most interest to her are the ones that resonate with each reader’s family history: “America may be on the way to becoming monstrous, but the situation is not hopeless. I prefer it when readers start thinking of fault lines in

their own families.”<sup>23</sup> Just as geological fault lines appear at the intersections of plates, Huston foregrounds the complexity of interconnecting histories in terms of all kinds of potentially traumatic legacies, sensitive to multidirectional shifts that can be displacing, disrupting, or indeed explosive.<sup>24</sup> Rothberg’s use of “multidirectional memory” as a structuring device for his exploration of Holocaust studies and postcolonial theory finds an echo in Huston’s title in the suggestion of movements and shifts. *Fault Lines* presents the many and diverse events that make up a catalog of familial dysfunction and trauma. This will be familiar to any family, Huston seems to be saying, albeit with an awareness that dysfunction spans a broad range and depth of traumatic experience.

## Sol: Encounters with Embodied Trauma

“capable at six of seeing {~?~COMP: Tab space} illuminating {~?~COMP: Tab space} understanding everything” (3)

In Sol’s narrative we learn that his problems are not solely attributable to an indulgent yet controlling parenting style. His difficulties connect with transgenerational patterns, in particular regarding his grandmother Sadie:

I know she’s [Sadie] counting on me to become the Great Genius none of the men in her life could be—neither her father who she actually never met, nor her husband who failed as a playwright and died young, nor her son who I once heard her call a spineless yuppie right to his face. I intend to live up to her expectations, I really do. (46)<sup>25</sup>

Evident from this description is an expectation of greatness to supersede family disappointment; Sol’s internalization of Sadie’s (and his mother’s) expectations, alongside an idealization of his own potential, is complicated by a traumatic experience of illness and by the traumatic impact of a family trip to Germany. Through these two episodes, omnipotence and self-sufficient brilliance are undermined, and ultimately collapse, via a complex network of transgenerational familial dynamics. His vulnerability is poignantly conveyed through encounters with a reality that tests

his sense of self and the desire to be exceptional (6).

The operation on Sol's "inherited" birthmark forces a dramatic and traumatic confrontation with his body as it really is. The mole on his face is presented as stigma (maintaining Christlike status) and as an imperfection and "defect" that requires "elimination" (14–15). His fantasies about being strong (like Schwarzenegger) (39) are juxtaposed with the humiliating reality of loss of potency: "The undressing. The feeling very small. My penis really tiny and shrivelled when I go to pee before the operation" (41). Afterward "excruciating" pain, akin to feeling "crucified" (43), suggests a displaced symbolic castration. A second operation brings panic and the threat of disintegration:

It turns out the doctor has to do a second operation. This time he puts me out. Lights out. Sun down. Sol obliterated in the middle of the day. When I come to and see Mom bending over me, I have several long seconds of panic because I can't remember who I am. It's a terrible feeling, but at last I manage to swim back up to the surface. (44)

Initially dismissed as a "little hurdle" (40), such medical interventions represent a traumatic turning point, highlighting the impact of the particular parenting context within the transgenerational strands of an embodied family history in which identification, self-image, and alienation feature: the concrete symbol of the birthmark, "handed down in the family for generations [although it] keeps turning up on different parts of the body" (26), enshrining familial wartime experiences of confusion, shame, and loss.<sup>26</sup> A somewhat precocious and disturbing sexuality, frequently linked with violent fantasy, is replaced by an apprehension of a (temporarily) destroyed self: "I don't feel like getting onto any of the Google sites or rubbing myself because I'm not myself yet" (44). Sol's awareness of his vulnerable body and his controlled food intake contrast with the violent images he greedily and excitedly devours on the Internet in a vicarious feeding ("I get onto the Net and drink in the images of Abu Ghraib," 36). This excitement around violence also references the context of the "war on terror" of the 2000s.

Like the operations, the family trip to Germany to visit great-grandmother Erra's "family home," and her long-estranged sister, proves also to be highly stressful. Sol recounts a rising panic during the flight, which persists as a generalized threat of disintegration (60). The source of his anxiety is rooted in his fear of the unknown and of situations beyond his control; these are experienced as humiliating in their capacity to expose vulnerability. Already in his story, a hatred of learning from others hinders his ability to connect with them (for example, Erra pointing things out to him—first a hibiscus bush, then a hummingbird [23–24]). His epistemophilic impulses and premature independence function like a defensive "second skin" that protect him from overwhelming anxieties. Child psychoanalyst Esther Bick writes of the development of such a muscular "second skin" in the infant who defends against painful or frightening experiences in an attempt to "hold" himself psychically together.<sup>27</sup> Sol finds himself, or more precisely loses himself, in unfamiliar territory, in a country where he does not speak the language. His response is to try to "shine up" his "tarnished self" amid the tension of family reunions and uncertainty about what this "return" means (63). Being alone, unattended to, is akin to annihilation ("as if I weren't really here," 68). He has to squeeze his body to make sure that he still exists (68).

Such descriptions resonate with theories elaborated by Melanie Klein and Wilfrid Bion: both argued that epistemophilic impulses, as well as other impulses driven by love and hate, inform development and relationships with others. In Margot Waddell's *Inside Lives*, a study of psychoanalysis and personality development, she writes that Klein described the epistemophilic impulse originating "in the infant's desire to fathom the contents of the mother's body, and [she introduced] a central distinction between intrusive curiosity, stimulated by voyeuristic need to 'know' in order to master and control, and a more enlightened desire to understand."<sup>28</sup> Bion, in

Waddell's words, suggested that in certain states of mind "having' knowledge can become a substitute for learning. . . . [i]f knowledge is acquired in the interests of potency rather than of insight"<sup>29</sup> This thirst to possess knowledge offers points to comparison with Sol's fantasies of omnipotence and omniscience: he dreams of storing information away, even if the contents are indigestible, "because nothing must escape my knowledge about the universe" (73). These defensive survival strategies flounder and break down with traumatic consequences. He experiences a dread (akin to Bion's descriptions of "nameless dread," or Winnicott's "annihilation"), fearing disintegration and collapse as he struggles to inhabit his imperfect but real self. This contrasts with the idealized "sun king" figure, nurtured by the individualistic, fame-obsessed, and violence-ridden culture in which he finds himself.

## Randall: The Problems and Possibilities of Playing and Reality

"The thing about grown-ups is that they make all the decisions and there's nothing you can do about it." (118)

In Part 2, the generational dynamics become increasingly evident with the presentation of the younger Randall who, in Part 1, figured through his marginalized relationship to son Sol, and his difficult relationships with disappointed mother Sadie and preoccupied wife Tess. Aged six, he is anxious to please, fearful of being inadequate, and contending with events over which he has little control. His "tense, hyper mother" contrasts with his "laid-back" father.

Striking in Randall's depiction is the importance of play—as a space for exploration and for the processing of traumatic experience. He states: "I'd always rather be playing than doing anything else because you can lose yourself completely. The rest of the time you worry about how well you're doing" (81). Randall's experience of loss of self is less threatening than Sol's, presented as an enjoyable part of his growing up, in which he appreciates his father's presence

and involvement in shared play. “Each season has its games you can lose yourself in,” he states (79). Play offers limitless possibilities and potentialities, and for Randall it happens outside and inside, all times of year, alone or with others. When playing is hampered by fear of failure (for example, when his mother criticizes his drawings), Randall retreats (81). Randall’s depictions offer a space for self-expression and the processing of aggressive feelings and anxieties. For instance, when the Playmobil and Lego are used for war games (94, 97), there is a cathartic relief accompanying the subversive response to his mother’s ban on soldier toys because “Mom is against war” (94). Randall’s drawings becoming increasingly violent in parallel with his anger about his mother’s decision to uproot the family to Israel in pursuit of further knowledge about the *Lebensborn* programs for her doctoral dissertation: “I draw big daggers plunging into women’s backs but I make sure the women don’t look like my mother just in case she finds my drawings” (119). The portraits of play chime with Winnicott’s views, as expressed in *Playing and Reality*: play enables the child to learn, and, crucially, to apprehend a sense of self, a feeling of being real and being alive. He writes that the capacity for play is a developmental achievement:

And on the basis of playing is built the whole of man’s experiential existence. No longer are we either introvert or extrovert. We experience life in some area of transitional phenomena, in the exciting interweave of subjective and objective observation, and in an area that is intermediate between the inner reality of the individual and the shared reality of the world that is external to individuals.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the creative and cathartic experiences offered by play, the use of what Winnicott called the “transitional object” features as an important resource in Randall’s narrative. The transitional object is a special belonging, often a soft toy, that has a particular significance for the child, and that occupies a crucial “me”/“not me” space enabling the child to separate from the primary caregiver and gradually to begin to explore the outside world. In

Randall's case, the object is his teddy bear Marvin, who carries familial associations, having belonged to his grandmother Erra. The bear, which accompanied Erra from Germany to Canada, enabled Randall to process the traumatic impact of his family's move from the United States to Israel. Onto the bear is played out his love and his hate, his rage and upset about the loss of his Palestinian friend Nouzha, and his parents' arguments about politics and war.<sup>31</sup> It is Marvin the bear who is "cut into" with scissors, whose throat is slit, whose ears and tail are cut off, and who is bagged up and thrown away (147–48). The object offers an intermediate space for the experiencing of overwhelming feelings; at the moment when Randall's parents tell him that they have "patched" things up between them, Randall thinks of his bear at the bottom of the garbage can (149). Thus, the transitional object, and play more generally, offer the opportunity for unconscious dynamics to be processed, often in close proximity to the experiencing of significant traumatic events.

Randall's father complains about his wife's neglect of her immediate family in pursuit of knowledge about her family history: "You're so obsessed with the suffering of those children forty years ago that you can't even see your own son suffering right next to you" (96).<sup>32</sup> Both father's and son's exclusion from Sadie's quest to find answers to her own transgenerational trauma complicates the experience in terms of her relationships. She is presented as someone who can only come alive and feel alive amid a past trauma, and this is shown to alienate her from her immediate family. Here, Huston may well be shining a light on the more problematic aspects of Holocaust studies, or more generally trauma studies, by selecting Sadie as a representative of a second-generation witness who becomes so involved in past history that her own life becomes eclipsed by a more appropriative dynamic, as her son Randall would appear to confirm: "Mom is always happy when she can hold forth against evil"(129).<sup>33</sup>

The trauma of the emotionally absent mother also emerges through Randall's dreams. In one, the fear of rejection looms large: his mother at her desk shouts at him to go away, that he is unwanted and never to bother her again (84). Another dream recounts a murder in broad daylight, which some, notably his parents, fail to notice, and others respond to in inappropriate ways, as if cleaning up the body were all just part of the normal service (123). Dreams play out preoccupations and longings. They highlight the boy's uncertainty about himself and his place in the family; they feature the pain of exclusion and loss. His mother's upbringing, and the traumatic threads running through her experiences, help to explain those "fault lines" that affect **on** her capacity to offer love, whether to herself or her child. Collective histories are shown to have a dramatic impact on individual lives, and we see repeatedly the ways in which the past lives on, traumatically, in the present.

## Sadie: Trauma, Confusions of Self, and the Search for Knowledge

"She's one of the world authorities on the cradle aspect of Aryanisation. To us it may be ancient history, but to her it's bone deep; to her it's *yesterday*; it's *now*; it's *her mother*." (51)

Sadie bears the brunt of the parenting critique in Randall's portrait: she is depicted as a career-driven academic who puts her research on Holocaust history before her family, who initiates the move to Israel despite their misgivings, and who is ultimately deemed responsible for Randall's father's premature death. The portrait of Sadie, by Sadie, is more poignant and nuanced. The impingements on her development have had far-reaching consequences and her experiences are linked through various disturbances. These include difficulties in self-expression; alienation from feeling "real"; compulsive rituals; and frequent self-bargaining to "make good" painful experiences by assuming responsibility for them. They also extend to bodily discomfort, especially regarding her birthmark ("the mark of the Fiend"), and feelings of failure and



inadequacy. Sadie restlessly seeks answers to unanswered—and perhaps unanswerable—questions (89, 103, 116–17). Here again, the theories of Winnicott, and in particular his writings on the development of a defensive “false self” to protect against early trauma, are pertinent. If there is insufficient stability of relationship, the development of the infant as a “going-on-being” will be hindered; instead a protective, coping, and adaptive persona develops.<sup>34</sup>

Sadie inhabits a world in which her mother’s absence is constantly, painfully present. Her early years, spent with strict grandparents in Toronto (the Ukrainian-born Kriswatys, who adopted Sadie’s mother Kristina via the postwar UNRRA program), are not happy ones. Sadie identifies herself as an unwanted “little-six-year-old bastard” (159). We can trace echoes here of the “fault lines” that endure in Randall’s troubled dreams about death and rejection. Her grandmother, keen to make amends for the perceived failures of her adoptive daughter, is more concerned about the welfare of material objects than of family members. The following extract is one of many descriptions of her unhappy predicament:

All these activities [piano, Brownies, ballet, gym, church] are for my own good, their purpose is to turn me into a brilliant gifted well-coordinated outstanding homemaker and citizen but it’s no use, I’ll always feel fat and stupid, clumsy and left out, backwards and lopsided, *inadequate* to put it bluntly. . . . I go through the motions to make them happy, smiling and nodding and standing on tiptoe, twirling in my tutu and sweating over the different sorts of knots, I can fool them most of the time but I can’t fool my Fiend, my Fiend knows I’m bad deep down and when the pressure builds up, all I can do is hit my head against the wall over and over again in the dark. (170)

Such descriptions attest to an awareness of a disjuncture between the self presented to the world and her own felt experiences—expressed in extracts such as the one cited here, via a stream-of-consciousness cumulative style that conveys increasingly frantic and self-punishing activity. There is the specter of failure, the fear of “flubbing up”(171, 173). Sadie evaluates, judges, and angrily berates herself, desperate to be loved by her mother and to belong.<sup>35</sup> The anger about her situation, and lack of control over others, is redirected toward the self.

Sadie's story bears witness to the confusion of identity that can be traced back to her mother's ambiguous origins ("if Mommy is German that means the Kriswatys aren't her parents which means they're not my grandparents either but it nonetheless remains that she's my mother and if my mother is German that means I'm half German at least" [229]). She describes the shock of inheriting a legacy hitherto unknown, yet already expressed via experiences of shame, anger, and guilt, positioning herself between an internalized "monstrous grimace of rage and insanity" and the outward presentation of a "good-little-girl mask" (158). The development of a protective "false self" persona is shown to emerge from a belief that if she can be good, her mother will then accept her. This is shown to be a mistaken illusion as she meets repeated disappointments ("if I'm nice and obedient and do everything right Mommy will take me to live with her" [158]; "if I were truly a good girl . . . , I'd be living with my mother and father like everybody else" [163]).<sup>36</sup> Her dreams offer a disturbing picture of neglect and rejection (164, 192), in imagery connecting with all four generations' unconscious fantasies of loss, abandonment, and death.<sup>37</sup>

Sadie's strict, undemonstrative, and somewhat puritanical grandmother is associated with Christian religious observance (164, 171, 178). This contrasts with the warmth of the fleeting family unit created by the marriage of her mother to Peter Silberman. He brings an experience of Jewishness, and ease with himself, that Sadie embraces. The "sad little girl" (169), who notes that her name connotes both "sad" and "sadist," is offered the promise of an idealized "princess" identity, her name in Hebrew connoting this latter meaning (211). We see the roots of Sadie's zealous conversion to Judaism in her positive experiences of a longed-for familial security via Peter and the "Peter-I-mean-Daddy" experience of paternal care (213), in which a Jewish "Sadie Silberman" can be found. For Sadie a new name brings comfort and security. Name-changing

also connects her to her mother's history and to the latter's complex relationship to names, especially given Kristina's awareness of the power of a name to endanger an identity.

Sadie's mother is presented by the young child as an idealized figure, a "golden halo around her head," almost unbearable in her longed-for presence (180). The little girl dreams of fusion and the prospect of a happy life to come. This is a mother who is publicly lauded, who "radiates charm" to the outside world (179), but who never materializes as the hoped-for mother (201). She seems, paradoxically, more "real" to her daughter in a photograph and on stage than when she is actually "present"/"absent" with her, despite her daughter's idealization of a woman "always completely where she is" (179). Sadie describes moments of rupture in the face of her mother's emotional absence: the latter seems to "disappear" or "freeze," resembling a dissociated state, described in abandonment terms as "gone somewhere else, far away" (191), and "so far away from me" (225). Sadie identifies with a fundamental "badness" in such experiences of abandonment, fuelling a search for understanding. This could be analyzed in terms of psychoanalyst André Green's description of a "dead mother" complex in which an emotionally absent mother (for whatever reason) is experienced by her child as an inner psychic deadness.<sup>38</sup> In Sadie's story, the mother is described at one point as follows: "Mommy turns to me in slow motion with her eyes glazed over as if the soul of a dead person had gotten into her body" (226). An unspeakable shame emerges in several embodied and intellectualized ways, via the perceived bodily "flaw" of the birthmark on her buttock, an internalized "inner Fiend" associated with "badness," Nazi blood (230), and "living a lie" (229). The image of a fantasized "goodness" via the halo image contrasts with the reality of the mother's absence and the daughter's experiences of darkness within herself. The sacrificial religious connotations of the halo also emphasize the gulf between fantasy and reality in Sadie's experience of the world. She needs to keep the

mother sanctified (and in a kind of unreal form) for as long as possible as a way to ward off conflicting feelings about their actual relationship, amid the pain of separation and loss.

A love of reading becomes a refuge amid the experiences of physical and psychological dislocation. Being “good” also offers a refuge from her internalized feeling “bad.” Reading is something she’s “good at” (201), but the stories the young Sadie describes are of the “lost and found” variety, as well as the more despairing “found and then lost” versions (202). A preoccupation with loss and death emerges from these initial forays in which she states somewhat chillingly, “I love books where people die” (202). The thirst to learn about the past, which her mother finds rebarbative, and her close family find alienating, becomes a lifeline amid the turmoil and confusion about who she is and where she has come from. Reading and books become the compensatory defense against the incomprehensible, and her compulsive research could be understood as a (re)searching of lost objects, notably her mother (96–97). One could also argue for evidence of an ethical engagement here, cemented and expressed via the reading encounter and her commitment to research, both personal and political. Yet Sadie’s sense of self is often overrun by the losses she “inherits,” and a repeating cycle of family disconnection can be traced in the text. A kind of parentified child, she risks losing contact with herself and those around her in the quest to reconnect with the longed-for lost mother.

Sadie’s experiences spell out a legacy of loss in which her strategies to manage personal and collective guilt become severely strained. Preoccupations with the past militate against her ability to be present with her immediate family. Implicit here is a critique of second-generation Holocaust research: Sadie risks losing sight of what LaCapra calls the positioning of “a remembering self” as enlightened witness, aware of transference dynamics.<sup>39</sup> However, her hopes for her family, her conversion to Judaism, and her relentless quest to uncover the history

of the *Lebensborn* children become more understandable when viewed in the light of the transgenerational “fault lines” that criss-cross her story. The older wheelchair-bound Sadie embodies a conflicted personality. She is both controlling persecutor and shamed victim, trapped by the ghosts of her past within an inherited trauma that lives on dynamically in the present. Sadie is caught up in a vicarious experience in which the “real” trauma most closely affecting the family remains unseen and unmourned. In a role reversal she becomes the parent of her mother, at the expense of her own capacity to mother, in a compulsive searching and researching of past traumas.

## Klarysa/Kristina/Erra/Great-Grandmother: Identity, Names, and (Not) Knowing

“So many of my questions go unanswered. When I grow up, in addition to being the Fat Lady in the circus and a famous singer, I’ll read all the books in the world and put their knowledge together in my head so that when my children and grandchildren ask me questions I can always answer them.” (244)

It seems paradoxical, given Kristina’s childhood desire to have all the answers, that she is the one who resists seeking or giving answers in her adult life. The depiction of her early years offers clues regarding this change in perspective. Its origins lie in the devastating trauma she suffers, as a *Lebensborn* child, taken from her Ukrainian parents too early for her to remember, but revisited in dreams and glimpsed through fragmented memories. This event, and its ramifications, shake her understanding of who she is and where she belongs. The future, as imagined from the UNRRA rehousing center, before being sent to Canada, is “nothing but an enormous question mark” (298).

The “fault lines” in Kristina’s experiences include the shock of finding out that the family she thought her own, and the language she considered her native tongue, were not so. Her beloved parents and grandparent, who taught her so much (236), were not who she imagined

them to be: “I know I used to love them, but that was when I thought I belonged to this family and this language and this home” (277). This upturning of her world results in a loss of faith in “knowledge” and “belonging”: “Grandpa says that people who go to hell are the waste of humanity but I don’t want to quote Grandpa anymore, even if he’s nice to me he’s not my grandfather and I don’t know what his wisdom is worth” (277). From a place of belonging, and a faith in God, knowledge, and culture, reinforced by a love of storytelling and song, she finds herself “a stranger to this household,” “living with the enemy” (242, 261, 278, 280). The shock of hearing from her sister Greta that she is adopted (255) becomes confused with a belief she has been given the wrong Christmas gift, and that something much more serious is amiss. A longstanding grievance about gifts (253), gifts given (and unwanted, a marching bear), not given (and forever desired, such as the doll belonging to her half-sister), assumes a thematic importance in the text. The doll returns as a longed-for lost object and symbol of unresolved past trauma, played out in the depiction of the sisters’ reunion decades later (76). As explored earlier, Kristina’s bear also offers nonetheless a reparative link to a younger generation.

Kristina has experienced multiple losses: the death of “brother” Lothar on her birthday transforms it into a “deathday” (247); the loss of her grandfather who, in a state of mental collapse, is taken away (287); the uncertainty about her “father” (289), not knowing whether he has been taken prisoner or is dead, followed by the loss of her German family after the war. For Kristina the ability to cut off from a “living reality,” evident from her “automaton” descriptions (257), becomes a necessary survival strategy. We have seen in the previous sections the extent to which her experiences inform subsequent generations, in particular Sadie, with all the “multidirectional” factors that affect each member of the family in their own socially and historically anchored circumstances.

The consequences of the devastating displacements and epistemological crises for Kristina are presented in various ways: via her scepticism thereafter about the value of knowledge; through her decision to change her name and to dis-affiliate herself from any particular language through her wordless singing. Identities are problematized in the process of name changes and through a questioning of the relationship between names, identity, and language. We learn that Kristina's original Ukrainian name might have been "Klarysa" (294). Kristina chooses to leave her stage name of "Krissy" to become "Erra" (201), representing a break from family affiliations (and Christian "anointed" associations with her first name, 250). German has become the language she dare not speak (with the power of its "Heil Hitler," 243), and Polish is the language Johann/Janek has beaten out of him. Singing with no language begins then as a self-protective and self-soothing strategy to ward off danger and bad dreams (278, 262). Singing also brings her fame and the prospect of being "found," by Johann/Janek, her fellow *Lebensborn* "brother" who was taken from his Polish family to live in Munich.

Themes of living and dying, of the living dead and the dead among the living, haunt her story. Depictions of nightmarish dreams, of neglected and abused children, "whining and bawling"; of an abandoned baby being left to die outside in the cold (259); of mutilation and chaos (288) combine with what appear to be early memories of screaming, dirty babies and toddlers, subjected to physical abuse, alongside incongruous descriptions of glamorous young women with painted toenails, negligées, and luxuriant long hair (261). As implicit awareness grows, these become sinister references to the *Lebensborn* centers where women deemed to be of the "right stock" were treated in luxury for reproductive purposes (261). These disturbing fragments hark back to the "remainders" of Kristina's early life prior to being placed with her German family. The images persist as familial fractures that traverse generational lines.

Kristina's illness following her discovery that she has been "adopted" (or more starkly, "stolen" from her birth family) is a further way in which, like Sol, her experience of herself as vulnerable body could be read as a metaphor for an inner collapse brought on by the shock of discovering the truth about her family and identity.

An uncertainty about the relationship of language to identity runs through her story, highlighting Kristina's confusion about who she really is ("I'm not the person I thought I was and I don't know who I am," 299). If the decision to choose the name "Erra" implies a moment of agency, contrasting with her previous experiences (and offering the promise that she might be found, 303), the name also carries connotations of death and violence. Dating back to Babylonian times, "Erra" is associated with war and death, supplicated to ward off disasters. From initially desiring a position of omniscience, Kristina finds herself preferring the zones of non- or shifting belonging, whether in terms of her familial relationships, institutions (such as school, or marriage), her fluid sexuality (moving from heterosexual to lesbian relationships), or identifications with various languages and cultures. The struggle to be a mother to her child recalls the unresolved mourning connected to the absent mother she carries within. While most prominent in Kristina's story, problems relating to identity and affiliation recur in the life experiences of all four generations of this family.

## Conclusion

"What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from."—T.S. Eliot, extract from "Little Gidding" (1942)

This analysis has attempted to highlight the extent to which unconscious "remainders" and "reminders" play their part in beginnings, endings, and the often confusing middle that is life.

These are the "reminders" and "remainders" that are repeated in a manner reminiscent of Freud's theories on repressed trauma and grief, as presented in "Remembering, Repeating, Working



Through” (1914), and in subsequent essays such as “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (1920). The trauma that is psychically stuck is endlessly repeated and revisited. This then complicates the grieving process and working through loss.<sup>40</sup> Huston’s presentation of transgenerational trauma engages with the implications of “caring” and “not caring” in domestic and public settings, using the image of the “fault line” to visualize the dynamic processes involved. Shifts occur in different temporal and spatial settings, and these problematize any straightforward linear chronology; they also resonate with ideas about the unconscious mind as a nonlinear atemporal structure (and its relationship to conscious mental processes). Huston seeks not to focus on the “badness” of certain regimes (as noted earlier). Rather, she explores what happens to children faced with such challenges and the impact on families of individual and collective trauma throughout the life cycle. The narrative depicts various manifestations of trauma via the four narrators and their familial experiences; caretaking is frequently characterized by role reversals and confusion of roles (who looks after whom). Confusion, responsibility, and the desire to repair in the face of loss, all aspects identified by Hirsch, recur in Huston’s exploration of childhood trauma across transnational contexts. Trauma is shown to be appropriated in ways that may, paradoxically, deny or avoid the individual’s experiences of mourning and loss. Overall, the implication emerging from the narrative is that childhood is an experience to be *survived*.<sup>41</sup>

“Reminders” and “remainders” from the past recur in ways that resonate with Frosh’s “call to action.” This is a call that literature, in this case the novel, can play a key role in communicating.

Dr Susan Bainbrigge began her research career by working on Simone de Beauvoir, on which she published the book *Writing Against Death: the Autobiographies of Simone de Beauvoir*. Francophone Belgian writers were then the focus of her research, publishing, with Jeanette den Toonder, an edited volume on Amélie Nothomb; then, with Joy Charnley and Caroline Verdier, *Francographies: Identité et altérité dans les espaces francophones européens*, an edited volume on author and psychoanalyst Jacqueline Harpman (*L’Aventure littéraire*), a Special Issue of the *Australian Journal for French Studies*, titled ‘Crises belges’, and the monograph *Culture and Identity in Belgian Francophone Writing: Dialogue, Diversity and Displacement*. More recent

and ongoing research focuses on transgenerational trauma in contemporary texts in French about World War II, and narratives of the therapeutic encounter, on which she is editing a book with Maren Scheurer, *Narratives of the Therapeutic Encounter: Psychoanalysis, Talking Therapies and Creative Practice*.

## Notes

1. *Des gens très bien* (Paris: Grasset, 2011).
2. Simon Kuper, "A Hell of an Inheritance," *Financial Times*, 28 January 2011. Online at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/b6c66190-28ef-11e0-aa18-00144feab49a.html> [accessed 31 March 2016].
3. Henry Rousso, *Le Syndrome de Vichy de 1944 à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 1987). Rousso explores the ways in which the exposure of the reality of Nazi occupation and collaboration undermined and troubled the postwar myth of a "résistancialiste" France, with enduring traumatic consequences.
4. As a starting point for recent studies, see *Framing Narratives of the Second World War in France: New Readings*, ed. Margaret Attack and Christopher Lloyd (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2012); *Mémoires occupées: fictions françaises et seconde guerre mondiale*, ed. Marc Dambre (Paris: Presses Sorbonne nouvelle, 2013); Special Issue, "Vichy 2010," ed. R. Golsan, *L'Esprit créateur* 50, no. 4 (2010); *La littérature française au présent—Héritage, modernité, mutations*, ed. Dominique Viart and Bruno Vercier (Paris: Bordas, 2005); *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narrative for the Future*, ed. Jakob Lothe, Susan Rubin Suleiman, and James Phelan (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2012); Kathryn N. Jones, *Journeys of Remembrance: Memories of the Second World War in French and German Literature, 1960–1980* (London: Legenda, 2007). For an overview and appraisal of scholarship on Holocaust literature, see *The Bloomsbury Companion to Holocaust Literature*, ed. Jenni Adams (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
5. *Fault Lines* (New York: Atlantic Books, 2008) (this edition is hereafter cited in the text). For comparative analyses of the two novels, see Élise Lepage, "Nancy Huston, empreintes et failles d'une mémoire sans frontières," *Francophonies d'Amérique* 29 (Printemps 2010): 79–95; and Alice Pick, "La langue fantasmée dans *L'Empreinte de l'ange* et *Lignes de faille* de Nancy Huston," in *Migrations, exils, errances et écritures*, ed. Corinne Alexandre-Garner and Isabelle Keller-Privat (Paris: Presses universitaires de Paris Ouest, 2012), 127–37. For studies on Huston and themes of identity, displacement, and loss, see publications by Averis, Day, Holmes, Kolb, and Rice. Extensive bibliographical details available at the Centre for the Study of Contemporary Women's Writing, IMLR, <http://modernlanguages.sas.ac.uk/centre-study-contemporary-womens-writing/languages/french/nancy-huston>. Pick's analysis addresses language, bilingualism, and difference, *ibid.* A recent special issue on Nancy Huston appeared in *Nottingham French Studies* 57 (2018).
6. Interdisciplinary and transnational studies in this field include Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory* and Max Silverman's *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* (New York: Berghahn, 2013). See also Alison Rice's recent study of the transnational and hereditary dimensions of Huston's novel in "Deferring the Familial Default: The Transnational Turn in Nancy Huston's *Lignes de faille*," *Nottingham French Studies* 57 (2018): 286–97.
7. Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (New York: Cornell University

- Press, 1994). See also Richard Crownshaw's study of transgenerational dynamics in relation to Holocaust memory in *The Afterlife of Holocaust Memory in Contemporary Literature and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
8. Lepage, "Nancy Huston, empreintes et failles d'une mémoire sans frontières," 93.
  9. See her study of second-generation Holocaust writing in *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). Such writing, whether fiction, art, memoir, or documentary, is understood to be a crucial means of dealing with transgenerational trauma. Of particular relevance here, Hirsch identifies the powerful feelings mobilized in the child of confusion, responsibility, and an unconscious desire to repair: "Second generation fiction, art, memoir, and testimony are shaped by the attempt to represent the long-term effects of living in close proximity to the pain, depression, and dissociation of persons who have witnessed and survived massive historical trauma. They are shaped by the child's confusion and responsibility, by the desire to repair, and by the consciousness that the child's own existence may well be a form of compensation for unspeakable loss" (112).
  10. Michael Rothberg, Claire Gorrara, and Andrea Reiter have highlighted tendencies in Holocaust writings to use child narrators, in particular considering how the Jewish child character is positioned in the text. See Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonisation* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); Gorrara, "Le passé recomposé: mémoire et postmémoire dans Des gens très bien d'Alexandre Jardin," in *Mémoires occupées: fictions françaises et seconde guerre mondiale*, ed. M. Dambre (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2013), 63–70; and Reiter, "Kinds of Testimony: Children of the Holocaust," in *Children of the Holocaust*, ed. A. Reiter (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005), 1–11.
  11. Stephen Frosh, *Hauntings: Psychoanalysis and Ghostly Transmissions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 166, 168.
  12. Such terms have proliferated in French-language critical studies since Lejeune's seminal work on the autobiographical genre. For recent studies, see Vincent Colonna, *Autofiction et autres mythomanies littéraires* (Paris: Tristram, 2004); and Philippe Gasparini, *Est-il je? Roman autobiographique et autofiction* (Paris: Seuil, 2004); *Autofiction. Une Aventure du langage* (Paris: Seuil, 2008).
  13. See Joanna Briscoe's review in *The Guardian*: "Despite acute observations and potentially highly emotive subject matter, it reads as an artificial imitation of real life: a clever-clever, shiny version supported by professional craft and research, but one that is ultimately inauthentic," 15 March 2008.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/mar/15/featuresreviews.guardianreview22>, and Susann Cokal's "Child's Play," in *The New York Times*, 31 October 2008, in which she writes: "Each child speaks in the present tense, implying life being recorded as it unfolds, but even a superintelligent 6-year-old (and I'm not convinced that Sol is one) has an imperfect command of vocabulary and syntax—which is why authors from Henry James ('What Maisie Knew') to Alison Lurie ('Only Children') have filtered childish observations through third-person limited voices. Sol has moments of disassociated, perhaps psychotic, fragmented narration, but for the most part, he and the rest sound like articulate 30-year-olds,"  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/02/books/review/Cokal-t.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/02/books/review/Cokal-t.html?_r=0) [accessed 16 March 2016].

14. *The Independent* interview, Gerry Feehily with Nancy Huston, "Biography—Nancy Huston: A View from Both Sides," 22 February 2008. <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/biography-nancy-huston-a-view-from-both-sides-785331.html> [accessed 16 March 2016].
15. Katherine Kolb, in "Fractures and Recastings in Nancy Huston's *Lignes de faille*," *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 14, no. 5 (2010): 525–32, and Lepage, "Nancy Huston," 92, examine the linguistic ramifications of the title regarding the novel's thematic concerns, whether as faults, failure, gaps, omissions, or generational differences.
16. See interview with Canwest News Service, 16 September 2007, on Huston's motivations: "Huston, whose own childhood was shattered at age six when her mother abandoned the family and a bad marriage, was inspired to write *Fault Lines* after hearing a lecture on Nazi SS commander Heinrich Himmler's Lebensborn (Fountain of Life) scheme." [http://www.canada.com/story\\_print.html?id=48b73b46-a6e5-4dce-90db-15bf16475dd3&sponsor=](http://www.canada.com/story_print.html?id=48b73b46-a6e5-4dce-90db-15bf16475dd3&sponsor=) [accessed 8 April 2016].
17. An international relief agency founded in 1943. Until 1947, it assisted nations affected by the war, including care and repatriation of millions of displaced persons and refugees. See Encyclopaedia Britannica online entry at <http://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Relief-and-Rehabilitation-Administration> [accessed 12 April 2016].
18. He also identifies with King Solomon, God, and Jesus (8, 9, 24).
19. Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism" (1914), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 14 (1914–1916) (New York: Vintage, 2001), 67–102.
20. Jean-Michel Quinodoz, *Reading Freud* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 128.
21. Donald W. Winnicott, *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development* (London: Karnac, 1990); first published 1965.
22. In "Fractures and Recastings," Kolb notes the role of caricature in the depictions (528).
23. Interview with Feehily, *The Independent*.
24. Note the metaphorical overlap of the novel's title with Hungarian psychoanalyst Balint's study of deficiencies in personality development, *The Basic Fault* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1968); reprinted by Routledge.
25. See also p. 50.
26. For further references to birthmarks, see 118, 135, 140, 304. The birthmarks also symbolize genetic belonging and enable Sadie to trace her mother's early history. See Rice, "Deferring the Familial Default," 292–93.
27. "The experience of the skin in early object relations" (1968), in Margot Waddell, *Inside Lives: Psychoanalysis and the Growth of the Personality* (London: Karnac, 2002), 49–51. See also W. R. Bion, *Learning from Experience* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1962), and M. Klein, "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms (1946)," in *Envy and Gratitude* (1946–63), *The Writings of Melanie Klein* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002).
28. Waddell, *Inside Lives*, 113.
29. Waddell, *Inside Lives*, 113.
30. Donald W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (New York: Routledge, 2005), first published 1971, 86.

31. His horror of his mother having thrown Marvin out “because he was so old and banged up” (90) prompts Randall’s statement on the importance of the object to him, precisely because of its worn and familiar features.
32. Sadie’s “need to know” (97) overshadows family life to a degree where her husband laments: “Listen, Sadie, of course this is all very fascinating, but I didn’t marry your ancestors, I married you and I sure wish I could spend some time with you once in a while” (111). In a similar vein, Randall sees her packed suitcases for a trip to Germany and observes that there’s no room for him in there (102), wondering if she thinks about him while she is absent (103).
33. Her study is titled *Rockabye Nazi Baby* (32). See also the comments by Sol on Sadie: “She can rant and rave all day telling my mother statistics on this stuff”; by Erra (32), and by Tess to Randall on Sadie: “Why can’t she just leave the subject alone, why does she have to keep on drumming these facts of ancient history into my head?” (51). See also Lepage on appropriation and the place of imagination in the “devoir de mémoire,” “Nancy Huston,” 93.
34. See Winnicott’s study of maturational processes, *The Maturation Processes*, chapter 3.
35. Her self-evaluations includes scoring herself out of ten and berating herself in front of the mirror (178, 198, 203).
36. See also 181, 183, 193.
37. In one dream there are piles of shoes, the image reminiscent of descriptions of piles of clothing, shoes, and personal belongings that were taken from concentration camp prisoners. In another, the images of babies being sent off to strangers resonates with the *Lebensborn* program.
38. This is understood as a response to traumatic disruption of maternal relatedness, which reemerges clinically in the transference relationship. See *The Dead Mother: The Work of André Green*, ed. Gregorio Kohon (New York: Routledge, 1999).
39. LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*.
40. “Remembering, Repeating, Working Through: Further Recommendations in the Technique of Psychoanalysis II (1914),” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XII (1911–1913): The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works (New York: Vintage, 2001), 145–156.
41. Note also that “survival” and “non-survival” of the object are key concepts in Winnicott’s study of maturational processes, *The Maturation Processes*.